



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3

JANUARY 30, 2009

## Pages Learn About Legislature



### Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: **governing society is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day.** As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

### Pages write bills

Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. They had their choice of working up a social bill or a fiscal bill to present in a mock committee hearing on Thursday with their partners. Hard decisions had to be made about cutting services and/or raising taxes in the budget committees. Topics for social bills included dating violence, amendments to the “Death with Dignity” initiative, plastic bag pollution, and minors being tried as adults.



### Wake-up call: later start times needed

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Kathleen Dolan and Cole Hauer introduced Senate Bill 6666, which addresses the issue of later start times for high school. “The bill is a good one because it will require schools to start no earlier than 8 a.m.,” said Sen. Hauer. This bill was proposed in order to allow teens to get more sleep, making them more alert and more in tune to their academic studies. William C. Dement, MD, PhD, Stanford University has said that, “Teenagers that do not get enough sleep have worse grades, more depression, anxiety, irritability; poorer attendance, and a greater tendency toward delinquency and violence.” A student from one Washington school said, “School should be intellectually challenging. Getting up so early is physically very difficult. It depletes our energy left for learning and thinking.” This bill would accommodate a teen’s biological tendency to stay up later at night and wake up later in the morning.





## Olympia senator tackles global warming

Olympia – Senate Bill 5009 was introduced yesterday by Senator Josh Gomez. “This bill addresses the issue of global warming and will reduce CO2 emissions and cut our dependence on foreign oil,” said Sen. Gomez. According to scientists, the planet is warming at a rate of 0.5 degrees F per decade, and the biggest cause of global warming is the increase in burning fossil fuels. The bill will authorize construction of a statewide public commuter train system that will serve major and minor cities. The project would be financed with money from the state transportation budget and the system would be maintained with money from passenger fares.

## Tran advocates changes to I-1000



Olympia – House Bill 1373 was introduced yesterday by Representative Catherine Tran. “This bill addresses the issue of Initiative 1000 and will insure that terminally ill patients have the best health care at the end of their lives,” said Rep. Tran. This bill will require that insurance companies offer plans for drugs which will include even expensive drugs to keep a

terminally ill patient living longer. It would also require, rather than recommend, that family members be informed of a patient's decision to end their suffering prior to death with a deadly prescription from a physician.

## Check-out time for plastic bags

Olympia – House Bill 1922 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Britta Janssen and Karling Rutenbeck. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will lower the amount of dangerous plastics reaching the environment,” said Rep. Janssen. The bill will require that major retail and grocery stores stop distributing plastic bags and that a government system to recycle the bags will be set up in cities and towns.



## Food additives problematic says Burke

Olympia – House Bill 1219 was introduced yesterday by Representative Hannah Burke. “This bill addresses the issue of food additives and will require food companies to clearly display any unnatural ingredients on the front of packaging, as well as in the ingredients list,” said Rep. Hannah Burke. Many ingredients that are now added to processed foods that 95 percent of Americans eat are found to increase many health problems plaguing Americans. High fructose corn syrup and trans fats both contribute to the 30,000 to 100,000 premature heart disease victims in America. Artificial food colorings and preservatives have also been linked to ADHD in children. “By requiring food companies to clearly display their bad ingredients, it will encourage them to take these ingredients out of their products for better sales, and it will make Americans more aware about what they are consuming,” said Rep. Burke.

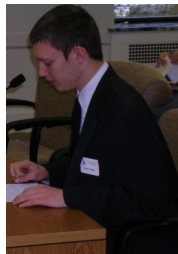


## Sen. Cecil helps kid's lungs

Olympia – Senate Bill 5000 was introduced yesterday by Senator Casey J. Cecil. “This bill addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in cars and will improve the health of our children,” said Sen. Cecil. The bill will prohibit drivers from smoking while driving or parked with children under the age of 18 in the automobile. “Washington already has a law prohibiting foster parents from smoking in a car. Why not protect all children?” said Sen. Cecil. According to scientists, second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer-causing.

## Serious state fiscal crisis may result in new taxes

Olympia—Yesterday, the House Ways and Means Committee heard testimony from Representatives Marissa Olson, Ellyn Hodgin, Matt Aust, Alina Cibicki, Ella Kuchmiy, Adam Kirkby, Trenton Ricker, Elliot Lawrence and Tyler Troutman regarding the projected revenue shortfall for the 2009-2011 biennium and the suggested remedies to balance the state operating budget. “We want to cause as little suffering as possible, but we are in a terrible economic crisis, the worst we’ve seen in decades,” said Rep. Troutman. Among the list of cuts offered were a 25 percent cut in spending on goods and services and an overall 2 percent cut for all departments. “There is a lot of waste in government. Too much paper is used,” said Rep. Kuchmiy. The representatives also propose to preserve the current class sizes in public schools. “Very little reduction in class numbers would be created by the \$140 million propose in the last biennium,” said Rep. Olson. Although many legislators had made campaign promises to forgo raising taxes, the committee saw a need



to make up for lost revenues by adding a 50 cent tax on cigarettes, a one percent tax on admission to movies, concerts and sporting events and a \$1 tax per liter bottle of liquor. In addition, the lawmakers suggested taxing personal income. “This would bring in \$2.4 billion and would be fair to everyone,” said Ricker. “I know times are bad, but we should come out of this situation in good shape if we make some sacrifices now,” said Rep. Cibicki. Represent-

tative Aust, a proponent of legalized gambling for several years, found that the time has finally come to get his bill through the legislature. “Allowing electronic slot machines in card rooms, restaurants, bars, bowling alleys and racetracks would raise nearly \$80 million and would provide new jobs in these trying economic times,” said Rep. Aust.



## Just teach it!

Olympia – Senate Bill 5265 was introduced yesterday by Senators Eric Betz and Kayla Wood. “This bill addresses the issue of teaching evolution and creationism in public schools and will resolve the conflict that has brewed in education for many years,” said Sen. Betz. This bill will finally settle the argument about what should be taught and will help people to be aware of both sides of the argument. If the bill becomes law, teachers will teach evolution as a theory in science class, not as solid fact. The story of creation will be taught in world history classes as a philosophy of Christianity.



## A question of age, a matter of justice

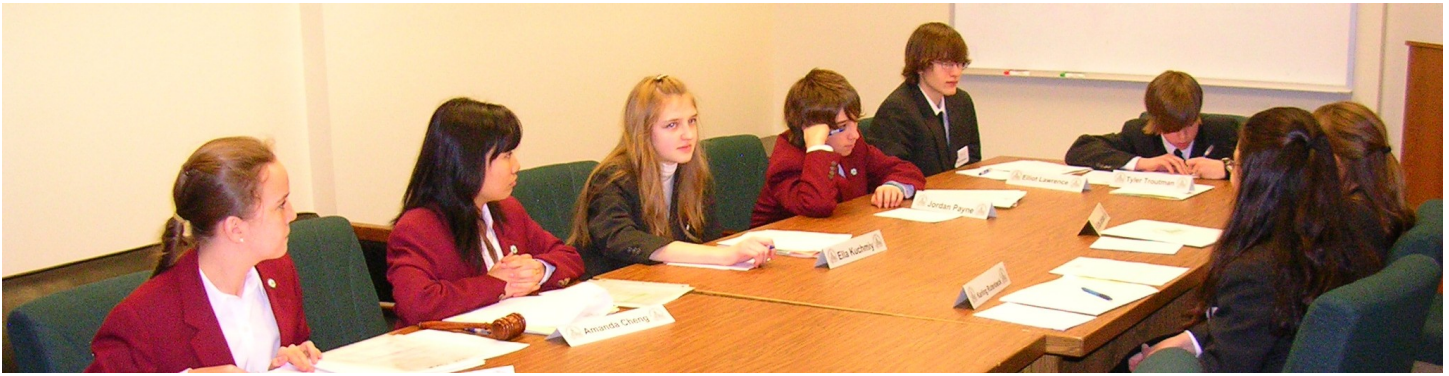
Olympia – Senate Bill 5001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Delany Ferrell and Kayla Woodruff. “This bill addresses the issue of minors being tried as adults and will ensure that children will not be sent to adult prisons until after they reach



the age of 18,” said Sen. Ferrell. This bill will make sure that juveniles are not put into situations that they are not yet mature enough to handle. Many minors cannot understand what it means to

be tried as an adult. “When the judge starts talking, I don’t know what he’s talking about,” says Jake Lee Eakin, an immature 12-year-old with a leaning disability who was arrested for killing a playmate in February 2004. “Minors are obviously not stable enough to deal with life in an adult prison without lasting damage,” said Sen. Woodruff.





## No DRM for Washington

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Liam Wingard introduced Senate Bill 5003, which addresses the issue of digital rights management (DRM). “The bill is a good one because it allows Washington residents to become completely free of media restrictions,” said Sen. Wingard. “The citizens of Washington State should have the right to use their purchased media without restrictions set by the manufacturer.” Statistics cited by the senator show that piracy rates do not increase when restrictions are lifted.

## Sklar and Geist fight DUI fatalities

Olympia – House Bill 1012 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Gregory Sklar and Joel Geist. “This bill addresses the issue of intoxicated drivers and will promote safer roads in America,” said Rep. Sklar. “We’re confident that the bill will immensely reduce the number of alcohol-related fatalities.” Those who drive while intoxicated will be forced to forfeit their drivers license for a minimum of five years, if this bill becomes law. If convicted of a secondary offence, they will forfeit their license permanently. There will be a very little cost involved because there will be no jail time involved unless injury is caused by the infraction.



## New bill requires parent approval for abortions

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Emma Wendt introduced Senate Bill 5678, which addresses the issue of parental consent for abortions performed on their minor children. “The bill is a good one because it may reduce the number of abortions in our state,” said Sen. Wendt. This bill will require that minors wanting abortions provide the signatures of the parents, saying that they approve of the operation. If the minor cannot produce the signatures, they can not have the abortion. If the parents are

deceased or cannot be traced, the legal guardian of the minor can sign in the parent’s place. “Churches and other private organizations will provide the money required for any new expenses needed to enforce this law,” said Sen. Wendt.

## Senate tries to balance budget



Olympia—Yesterday Senators Nicholas Alagna, Austin Mannello, Amanda Cheng, Connor O’Brien, Symphony Canady, and Jordan Payne met with the Senate Ways and Means Committee to pound out hard solutions to a serious budget shortfall predicted for the next biennium. “There just doesn’t seem to be any way around raising some taxes,” said Sen. Canady. Among the suggested tax increase were a 50 cent per pack cigarette tax, a one percent tax on entertainment such as movies and concerts, and a temporary increase in the sales tax by .1 percent. “This could bring in \$418 million in revenue,” said Sen. Cheng. Advocating a 25 percent cut on goods and services, Sen. Mannello rationalized that, although paper, printing, tape and paper clips are valuable items for a workplace, if they are used in a wasteful manner, they cost a lot of money for the state. “This measure would encourage everyone to restrain from wasting supplies, promote recycling, and save the state \$200 million.” “Unfortunately, there is no easy fix for this situation,” said Sen. Alagna. “Everyone is going to have to tighten his belt and make sacrifices.”



## Guest speakers visit Page School



Senator Craig Pridemore (D-49th), Code Reviser Kyle Thiesen, and Legislative Assistants Paula Rehwaldt (Rep. Eddy) and Barrett Pryce (Sen. Hewitt) joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker's questions.

## Figueroa and Galloway seek educational improvements

Olympia – House Bill 1022 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Isabella Figueroa and Kaylee Galloway. “This bill addresses the issue of basic education and will reduce class sizes, allowing student-teacher interaction to increase,” said



Rep. Figueroa. The quality of a student's education is vital for the development of a knowledgeable person and for a successful future. The ability for well educated teachers to properly teach depends on a reasonable class size. “Teachers play an influential role in the edu-

cation process, but can not adequately teach their students when class sizes are outrageously large,” said Rep. Galloway. “We are proposing that classes averaging 30 people per class be reduced to no more than 20.”

## Be cool, stay in school!

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Amelia Stracener and Becca Hess. “This bill addresses the issue of high school drop-outs and will create a better learning environment for kids,” said Rep. Hess. This bill will help reduce the amount of high school drop-



outs within the state. Studies show that dropouts earn \$9,200 less per year than high school graduates. Dropouts were more than eight times more likely to end up in jail or prison. “Without graduating high school it is harder to find a high paying job, which can lead to homelessness and poor health,” said Rep. Stracener. “Because many students say that their classes are just not interesting enough to stay in school, our proposed legislation will create more interesting classes by providing more professional development for teachers,” said Rep. Hess. The bill also provides opportunities for parents to become more involved in the education of their children.

## Adults must supervise underage hunters

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Jarrett Hansen and Senator Andrew Teijen introduced House Bill 1001, which ad-



dresses the issue of minor hunters. “The bill is a good one because it will create a safer environment for both hunters and hikers,” said Rep. Hansen. This bill will separate hunting and hiking zones so

accidental deaths and injuries will not occur. It will also require underage hunters to be accompanied by an adult over the age of 21 when they are hunting. The state of Washington currently does not have an age limit for hunting licenses.

## Senators put end to teen dating violence

Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Alli Breaker and Julia Snyder and addresses the issue of dating violence among teens.



“This bill will provide educational programs and help centers for teens who need to speak out about their abusive situations,” said Sen. Snyder. The bill recognizes that teens sometimes don't know they are actually being abused, so they let the hurt continue. The program will inform teens about the widespread problem of teen violence and how to get help. It has been found that 25 percent of 8th and 9th graders surveyed said that they had been victims of dating violence, including eight percent who said they had been sexually abused. The bill will create programs that provide for victims so that they can escape the cycle of abuse. “After all, love is NOT abuse,” said Sen. Breaker.





## Mock committees debate bills, vote

Simulated committee hearings were held on Thursday. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

## Page School teachers begin new year

The Washington State Legislature’s 2009 Page School employs teachers Judi Orr, a certificated teacher, and Matt Kreiling, former Legislative intern and lobbyist. Judi is a retired social studies and English teacher who taught for over 35 years in the Clover Park School District, and Matt lobbied for the Washington Student



Lobby representing college students throughout Washington. Both teachers enjoyed meeting so many students from all parts of Washington and teaching them more about how state government functions.



## Page program over 100 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional.



## Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: [www1.leg.wa.gov/WorkingwithLeg/PageSchool/](http://www1.leg.wa.gov/WorkingwithLeg/PageSchool/). This newsletter has been posted there.

